

Chairman Perone, Chairman LeBeau, Members of the Commerce Committee, for the record my name is Raymond Churchill from Griswold. I am the president of the Eastern Ct. Performing Arts Association and I am here to testify in support of SB 141, AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR THE EASTERN CONNECTICUT PERFORMING ARTS ASSOCIATION. This bill would authorize up to \$500,000 for the ECPAA for the renovation and remodeling of a performing arts center to promote the performing arts, theater education, economic development and tourism. Good Morning and thank you for the invitation to speak in front of you today.

To quote a portion of our mission statement, "The Eastern Connecticut Performing Arts Center will provide exposure to the arts at an affordable price for the region's residents and nurture a collaborative community of artists through education programs that promote life-long learning to the community."

The ECPAA is going to be a corner stone in the effort to bring back a pulse to the eastern part of our great state. Our towns are filled with wonderful people who crave the same artistic, educational, social and economic benefits that are enjoyed by many residents of the more affluent and urban towns. I truly believe that the addition of a performing arts and arts education center will revitalize our economically downtrodden communities. We call Jewett City home and expect to plant our roots right downtown on Main St.. From this central location we can offer our services to all towns on the I395 corridor. Jewett City is currently listed as #171 of 180 towns in Connecticut, based on per-capita income and is worthy of your assistance.

Our goals and mission are not based on a "Pie in the Sky" dream. They are deeply rooted in fact. We have used the Bradley Playhouse in the town of Putnam, as our model. Prior to the re-opening of the Bradley, the downtown area of Putnam was very similar to what Jewett City is now. Putnam's town planner was recently quoted as saying that the Bradley Playhouse's re-opening has been key to Putnam's growth into a tourist destination and economically stable area.

Since our inception in 2011, the board of directors and more than 400 members of the ECPAA community have been busy fundraising and carrying out our mission. Our performing arts classes have high enrollment rates. We have produced two major fundraising performances stocked with local professional talent, augmented by more than 100 community members and hosted by Connecticut celebrities, such as Joe D'Ambrosio, "The voice of the Huskies" and Matthew Campbell from Channel 3. As a result, we were invited by Governor Malloy to perform and have a reception in our honor, at the governor's mansion in January 2013.

I'm incredibly proud to be involved in the ECPAA. We have provided a wonderful service to our community in our first 3 years. However, we have hit the proverbial financial ceiling. We need to grow and can't. I ask this committee to lift that ceiling and enable us to service many deserving people. The model of how an active, performing arts center can affect a community has been proven throughout the state. Theaters bring tourists. Tourists bring money. Money builds towns, creates jobs and re-builds communities. Most of those theaters, however, don't also offer year round arts education classes. We do. This is why I believe that we can truly make a difference for our communities by attracting a steady flow people to Eastern Connecticut. I thank you for your time today and your consideration on this bill.

**THE PREMIERE PLACE  
FOR ARTS EDUCATION  
IN EASTERN CONNECTICUT**

## MISSION STATEMENT

### The Eastern Connecticut

### Performing Arts Association

engages, entertains, inspires and challenges audiences with high quality, professional and innovative theatrical productions that range from the classics to new works; we aim to nurture a collaborative community of artists dedicated to revitalizing the region's love for the arts and are committed to training and supporting a new generation of artists through arts education programs that promote life-long learning to the community.

PLACE  
HERE  
STAMP

# EASTERN CONNECTICUT PERFORMING ARTS ASSOCIATION



150 Bligood Road, Griswold, CT 06351

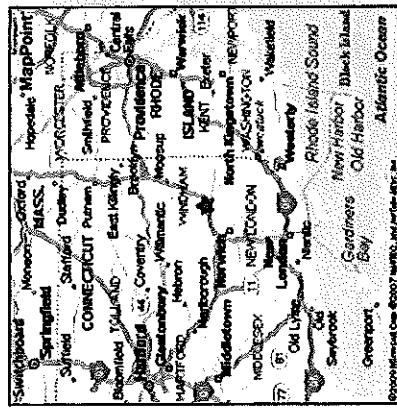
**PERFORMING ARTS ASSOCIATION**  
**EASTERN CONNECTICUT**



### PROMISE TO THE COMMUNITY

ECPAA will be a valuable contributor to the Griswold business community as employers, producers, consumers and key promoters of the city and region. We expect to bring in approximately 900 people weekly for classes and productions.

ECPAA will provide exposure to the arts at an affordable price and a much needed artistic outlet for the region's residents with a myriad of educational opportunities for all ages.





## WHAT WE DO

### THEATRE EDUCATION

The ECPAA Education Department will offer year-round theatre education classes and workshops that will provide people of all ages with an artistic outlet where they can acquire important life skills and become confident, well-rounded, creative individuals. In a fun and creative way, theatre teaches balance, teamwork, respect, a passion for results and so many other core values.

### WHO WE ARE

The Eastern Connecticut Performing Arts Association (ECPAA) is a newly formed 501(c)(3) non-profit arts organization composed of **performers, artists and prominent local business people** who seek to improve the state of the arts in **Griswold** and the surrounding communities.

Exposure to the arts **builds connections** between people, encourages interaction, and challenges perceptions - all vital to a healthy community. ECPAA will entertain and inspire community members of all ages and backgrounds through a full series of **high quality, entertaining and innovative Main Stage** productions. We will nurture a **collaborative community** of professional artists dedicated to fostering the area's strong love for the arts. Year long arts **education** programs will train a new generation of artists in the fundamentals of theatre and performance while reinforcing core values. ECPAA is deeply committed to enriching lives through the **transformative power and joy of live theatre.**

ECPAA proposes to find and renovate a local space into the new home of the region's premiere center for performing arts and theatre education.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

"In my own philanthropy and business endeavors, I have seen the critical role that the arts play in stimulating creativity and in developing vital communities. The arts have a crucial impact on our economy and are an important catalyst for learning, discovery, and achievement in our country."

- Paul G. Allen, Philanthropist and Co-Founder, Microsoft

Please mail this form to:  
**Eastern Connecticut Performing Arts Association**  
150 Bitgood Road, Griswold, CT 06351

For information on Corporate Sponsorship Opportunities,  
Please Contact:  
ECPAA Vice President Terry Cholewa  
at terrycholewa@snet.net

### IN THE NEAR FUTURE... QUALITY MAIN STAGE PROGRAMMING

ECPAA will be the premiere location for area residents to see professional quality live theatre. The Main Stage season will feature seven productions annually. Each production will aim to entertain, challenge and inspire our audiences while creating stimulating discussion and debate and fostering a love for the art. Our innovative theatrical productions will cover the full range of the classics, new works, musicals, comedies, dramas and family entertainment and will combine local talent with professional performers from Actor's Equity Association.

"Art is fundamental, unique to each of us. Even in difficult economic times - especially in difficult economic times - the arts are essential."

- Maria Shriver, First Lady of California, Award-Winning Journalist

PAYMENT INFORMATION  
 Check Enclosed

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF ECPAA.



An abbreviated list of towns in Connecticut ranked by per capita income. 2010 census. The under-lined towns are those that will be most effected by the ECPAA's services.

157 <u>Norwich</u>	City	New London	\$26,702
158 North Canaan	Town	Litchfield	\$26,700
159 <u>Putnam</u>	Town	Windham	\$26,506
160 Derby	City	New Haven	\$26,264
161 Ansonia	City	New Haven	\$26,225
162 Torrington	City	Litchfield	\$25,948
163 West Haven	City	New Haven	\$25,884
164 <u>Sterling</u>	Town	Windham	\$25,557
165 Winsted	City	Litchfield	\$25,291
166 <u>Killingly</u>	Town	Windham	\$25,215
167 Brooklyn	Town	Windham	\$25,124
168 <u>Plainfield</u>	Town	Windham	\$24,825
169 East Hartford	Town	Hartford	\$24,373
170 Bantam	Borough	Litchfield	\$24,284
171 <u>Jewett City</u>	Borough	New London	\$23,876
172 <u>Danielson</u>	Borough	Windham	\$22,798
173 New Haven	City	New Haven	\$21,789
174 Mansfield	Town	Tolland	\$21,579
175 Waterbury	City	New Haven	\$21,545
176 <u>New London</u>	City	New London	\$21,110
177 New Britain	City	Hartford	\$21,056
178 Windham	Town	Windham	\$20,272
179 Bridgeport	City	Fairfield	\$19,854
180 Hartford	City	Hartford	\$16,798